

**Section IIC:**

**Request for Applications Under the Office of Community Services'**

**Fiscal Year 2003 Community Food and Nutrition Program**

**ACTION:** Announcement of availability of funds and request for competitive applications under the Office of Community Services' Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP).

**SUMMARY:** The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Community Services (OCS), invites eligible entities to submit competitive grant applications for new grants for the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) pursuant to the Secretary's discretionary authority under section 681 of the Community Services Block Grant Act, as amended [Sec. 42 USC 9922].

**Dates:** The closing time and date for receipt of applications is 4:30 p.m. (Eastern Time Zone), August 11, 2003. Mailed or hand carried applications received after 4:30 p.m. on the closing date will be classified as late.

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA) NUMBER:** 93.571.

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## **PART A: Background Information**

### *1. Legislative Authority*

The Community Services Block Grant Act, as amended, authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make funds available under several programs to support program activities that will result in direct benefits targeted to low-income people. This program announcement covers the grant authority found at section 681 of the Community Services Block Grant Act, (The Act) (Pub. L. 97-35) as amended by the Community Opportunities, Accountability, and Training and Educational Services Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105-285), Community Food and Nutrition Program. The Act authorizes the Secretary to award grants on a competitive basis to eligible entities for faith and community-based, local, statewide, and national programs including programs benefiting Indians (as defined in 42 USC 9911) and migrant farm workers. Grant funds are provided to: (1) coordinate private and public food assistance resources, wherever the grant recipient involved determines such coordination to be inadequate, to better serve low-income populations; (2) assist low-income communities to identify potential sponsors of child nutrition programs and to initiate such programs in underserved or unserved areas; and (3) develop innovative approaches at the State and local level to meet the nutrition needs of low-income individuals.

## *2. Program Purpose*

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is committed to improving the overall health and nutritional well being of all individuals, including low-income persons, through improved preventive health care and promotion of personal responsibility.

DHHS also recognizes that improving the health and nutrition status of low-income persons can also be improved by access to healthy, nutritious foods or by other means. The DHHS encourages community efforts to improve the coordination and integration of health and social services for all low-income families, and to identify opportunities for collaborating with other programs and services for this population. Such collaboration can increase a community's capacity to leverage resources and promote an integrated approach to health and nutrition through existing programs and services.

## *3. Project Goals*

The goals of the Community Food and Nutrition Program are: (1) to coordinate private and public food assistance resources, wherever the grant recipient involved determines such coordination to be inadequate, to better serve the food and nutrition needs of low-income populations; (2) to assist low-income communities to identify potential sponsors of child nutrition programs and to initiate such programs in underserved or unserved areas; and (3) to develop innovative approaches at the State

and local level to meet the nutrition needs of low-income individuals, including displaced workers, elderly people, children, and the working poor.

#### *4. Definition of Terms*

For purposes of this program announcement, the following definitions apply:

*Budget Period* – The interval of time into which a grant period of assistance (project period) is divided for budgetary and funding purposes.

*Capacity-Building* – refers to activities that assist eligible entities to improve or enhance their overall or specific capability to plan, deliver, manage and evaluate programs efficiently and effectively to produce intended results for low-income individuals. This may include upgrading internal financial management or computer systems, establishing new external linkages with other organizations, adding or refining a program component or replicating techniques or program piloted in another local community, or making other cost effective improvements.

*Displaced Worker* – An individual who is in the labor market but has been unemployed for six months or longer.

*Eligible Applicant* – State and local governments, as well as Indian tribes, and public and private non-profit agencies/organizations, including faith-based and community organizations.

*Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Communities* – Those communities designated as such by the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

*Indian Tribe* – A tribe, band, or other organized group of Native American Indians recognized in the State or States in which it resides, or considered by the Secretary of the Interior to be an Indian tribe or an Indian organization.

*Innovative Project* – One that departs from, or significantly modifies, past program practices and tests a new approach.

*Migrant Farm Worker* – An individual who works in agricultural employment of a seasonal or other temporary nature who is required to be absent from his/her place of permanent residence in order to secure such employment.

*Program Income* – Gross income earned by the grant recipient that is generated by an activity supported with grant funds.

*Project Period* – The total time for which a project is approved for support, including any approved extensions.

*Seasonal Farm Worker* – Any individual employed in agricultural work of a seasonal or other temporary nature who is able to remain at his/her place of permanent residence while employed.

*Self-Sufficiency* – A condition where an individual or family does not need, and is not eligible to receive, TANF assistance under Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act.)

*Underserved Area* – (as it pertains to child nutrition programs) – A locality in which less than one-half of the low-income children eligible for assistance participate in any child nutrition program.

## **PART B. Program Objectives and Requirements**

The Office of Community Services invites eligible entities to submit competing grant applications for Community Food and Nutrition Projects that will establish, support, and/or manage food and nutrition services for low-income people. The main objective of the CFNP is to link low-income people to food and nutrition programs.

### *1. Project Requirements*

Focus on one or more legislatively-mandated program activities: (a) coordination of private and public food assistance resources, wherever the grant recipient involved determines such coordination to be inadequate, to better serve low-income populations; (b) assistance to low-income communities in identifying potential sponsors of child nutrition programs and initiating such programs in unserved or underserved areas; and (c) development of innovative approaches at the state and local level to meet the nutrition needs of low-income individuals.

Additionally, in carrying out such activities, projects funded under this program should (1) be designed and intended to provide nutrition benefits, including those that incorporate the benefits of disease prevention, to a targeted low-income group of people; (2) provide outreach and public education to inform eligible low-income individuals and families of other nutritional services available to them under the various Federally-assisted programs; (3) carry out targeted communications and social marketing to improve dietary behavior and increase program participation among eligible low-income populations. Populations to be targeted can include displaced



workers, elderly people, children, and the working poor, and (4) consult with and/or inform local officials that administer other food programs such as W.I.C. and Food Stamps, where applicable, to ensure effective coordination that can jointly target services to increase their effectiveness. Such consultation may include involving these offices in planning grant applications.

OCS views this program as a capacity-building program (See definition), rather than a service delivery program.

## *2. Program Priority Areas*

Although there are two Program Priority Areas for Fiscal Year 2003, this announcement is only announcing availability of funds for Priority Area 1.0, General Projects. Applications will not be accepted for Priority Area 2.0 because OCS awarded a three-year cooperative agreement in Fiscal Year 2002.

### General Projects – Priority Area 1.0

The application should describe the target area and population to be served and discuss the nature and extent of the problem to be solved. The application must contain a detailed and specific work program that is sound and feasible. Projects funded under this announcement must produce lasting and measurable results that fulfill the purposes of this program as described above. OCS grant funds, in combination with private

and/or other public resources, must be targeted to low-income individuals and communities.

Applicants will certify in their submission that projects will only serve the low-income population as stipulated in the DHHS Poverty Income Guidelines (Attachment A). Failure to comply with the DHHS Poverty Income Guidelines may result in the application not being considered for funding.

If an applicant proposes a project that will affect a property listed in, or eligible for, inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, it must identify this property in the narrative and explain how it has complied with the provisions of section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. If there is any question as to whether the property is listed in, or is eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places, the applicant should consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer. The applicant should contact OCS early in the development of its application for instructions regarding compliance with The Act and data required to be submitted to DHHS.

When projects propose to mobilize or improve the coordination of existing public and private food assistance resources, the guidelines governing those resources apply. However, when projects propose to provide direct assistance to beneficiaries through grants funded under this program, those beneficiaries must fall within the official DHHS Poverty Income Guidelines as set forth in Attachment A.

Applications proposing the use of grant funds to develop printed or visual materials must contain convincing evidence that these materials are not available from other sources. OCS will not provide funding for such items if justification is not

sufficient. Approval of any films or visual presentations proposed by applicants approved for funding will be made part of the grant award. When material outlays for equipment (audio and visual) are requested, specific evidence must be presented that there is a definite programmatic connection between the equipment (audio and visual) usage and the outreach requirements described in Part B of this announcement.

### *3. Eligible Applicants*

Eligible applicants are State and local governments, Indian tribes, and public and private non-profit agencies/organizations including faith-based organizations with a demonstrated ability to successfully develop and implement programs and activities similar to those enumerated above.

The Office of Community Services encourages Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and minority institutions to submit applications. Eligible applicants with programs benefiting Native Americans and migrant or seasonal farm workers are also encouraged to submit applications.

Any non-profit organization submitting an application must submit proof of its non-profit status in its application at the time of submission. The non-profit agency can accomplish this by providing:

- a. A reference to the applicant organization's listing in the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) most recent list of tax-exempt organizations described in the IRS Code;
- b. A copy of a currently valid IRS tax exemption certificate;
- c. A statement from a State taxing body, State attorney general, or

- other appropriate State official certifying that the applicant organization has a non-profit status and that none of the net earnings accrue to any private shareholders or individuals;
- d. A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes non-profit status;
  - e. Any of the items in the paragraphs immediately above for a State or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant is a local non-profit affiliate.

Private, non-profit organizations are encouraged to submit with their applications the optional survey located under "Grants Manuals & Forms" at:

**[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/forms.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/forms.htm)**

#### *4. Availability of Funds and Grant Amounts*

##### *a. Fiscal Year 2003 Funding*

The funds available for grant awards under the Community Food and Nutrition Program (CFNP) in Fiscal Year 2003 are: General Projects – Priority Area 1.0: @ \$2,100,000.

There are no new funds available during FY 2003 for Priority Area 2.0 – Nationwide Projects.

## b. Grant Amounts

No individual grant application will be considered for an amount in excess of \$50,000 for applications submitted under General Projects.

## *5. Mobilization of Resources*

There is no match requirement for the Community Food and Nutrition Program. However, OCS would like to mobilize as many resources as possible to enhance projects funded under the CFNP. OCS supports and encourages applications submitted by applicants whose programs will leverage other resources, either cash or third party in-kind.

## *6. Project Periods and Budget Periods*

The project and budget period for CFNP grant awards is one year. However, in rare instances, depending on the characteristics of an individual project and the justification presented in the application, a grant may be made for a project period of up to 17 months.

## *7. Administrative Costs/Indirect Costs*

There is no predetermined administrative cost ceiling for projects funded under this program. Indirect costs consistent with approved indirect cost rate agreements are

allowable. Applicants should enclose a copy of the current approved rate agreement. However, it should be understood that indirect costs are part of, and not in addition to, the amount of funds awarded in the subject grant.

#### *8. Program Beneficiaries*

Projects proposed for funding under this announcement must result in direct benefits targeted toward low-income people as defined in the most recent annual update of the Poverty Income Guidelines published by DHHS. Attachment A to this announcement is an excerpt from the most recently published guidelines. Annual revisions of these guidelines are normally published in the Federal Register in February or early March of each year and are applicable to projects being implemented at the time of publication. Grantees will be required to apply the most recent guidelines throughout the project period. The Federal Register may be obtained from public libraries, Congressional offices, or by writing the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. The Federal Register is also available on the Internet through GPO Access at the following web address:

[http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/aces/aces140.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html)

No other government agency or privately defined poverty guidelines are applicable to determining low-income eligibility for this OCS program.

#### *9. Number of Projects in Application*

An application may contain only one proposed project and this project must address the basic criteria found in Parts A and B, and Section III of this announcement. Applications not complying with these requirements will not be funded.

#### *10. Multiple Submittals*

There is no limit to the number of applications that can be submitted by an eligible applicant as long as each application is for a different project. However, no applicant will receive more than one grant.

#### *11. Sub-Contracting or Delegating Projects*

OCS will not fund any project where the role of the eligible applicant is primarily to serve as a conduit for funds to other organizations.

#### *12. Evaluation Criteria*

##### **Application Elements and Review Criteria for Applications**

Each application that passes the initial screening described in Section IV, of this program announcement, will be assessed and scored by three independent reviewers. Each reviewer will give a numerical score for each application. These numerical scores

will be supported by explanatory statements on a formal rating form describing major strengths and weaknesses under each applicable criterion published in the announcement. Scoring will be based on a total of 100 points, and for each application will be the average of the scores of the three reviewers.

The competitive review of applications will be based on the degree to which applicants: (a) adhere to the requirements in Parts A and B and Sections III, IV and VI; and (b) incorporate each of the Elements and Sub-Elements below into their applications, so as to describe convincingly a project that will develop new food and nutrition services/activities to benefit low-income households including displaced workers, elderly people, children, and the working poor.

In order to simplify the application preparation and review process, OCS seeks to keep grant applications cogent and brief. Applications with project narratives (excluding project summaries, budget justifications, and appendices) exceeding 30 letter-sized pages of 12 pitch type or equivalent on a single side will not be reviewed. Applicants should prepare and assemble their project descriptions using the following outline of required project elements. They should, furthermore, build their project concept, plans, and application description upon the guidelines set forth for each of the project elements.

Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance, not length. Pages should be numbered consecutively and a table of contents should be included for easy reference. Applicants are reminded that the overall project narrative must not exceed 30 pages.

When writing their project narratives, applicants should respond to the review criteria using the same sequential order.



**Criteria for Review and Evaluation of Applications Submitted Under This  
Program Announcement:**

The review criteria both reiterate and explain in greater detail the information requirements contained in Section III of this announcement.

**Evaluation Criterion I. Results or Benefits Expected (Maximum: 30 points)**

*Element I. Significant and Beneficial Impact (0-30 Points)*

*Sub-Element I(a) Improvement in Nutrition Services to Low-Income People (0-15 Points)*

Applicants shall address how they propose to significantly improve or increase nutrition services to low-income people and indicate how such improvements or increases are quantified.

*Sub-Element I(b) Promotional Health and Social Service activities Included in Nutrition Services (0-5 Points)*

Applicant incorporates into the project awareness of health and social services activities for low-income people along with nutritional services.

*Sub-Element I(c) Commitment of Resources (0-5 Points)*

Applicant indicates that the project will significantly leverage or mobilize other community resources. These resources are detailed and quantified.

*Sub-Element I(d) One Time Funding (0-5 Points)*

Applicant demonstrates either that the project addresses problem(s) that can be resolved by one-time OCS funding, or demonstrates that non-Federal funding is available to continue the project without Federal support.

In addressing the above criterion, the applicant must include quantitative data for items (a), (b), and (c), and discuss how the beneficial impact relates to the relevant legislatively-mandated program activities identified in Parts A and B and the problems and/or needs described under Criterion V.

**Evaluation Criterion II. Approach (Maximum: 25 points)**

*Element II. Adequacy of Work Program (0-25 Points)*

*Sub-Element II(a). Realistic Quarterly Time Lines (0-10 Points)*

Applicant should provide realistic quarterly projections of the activities to be carried out including the projected number of beneficiaries to be served each quarter.

*Sub-Element II(b). Detailed Work Plan (0-15 Points)*

Applicant must insure that activities are adequately described and appear reasonable likely to achieve results which will have a desired impact on the identified problems and/or needs.

In addressing this criterion, the applicant should address the basic criteria and other mandated activities found in Parts A and B and should include:

(1) Project priorities, and rationale for selecting them, which relate to the specific nutritional problem(s) and/or need(s) of the target population identified under Criterion V;

(2) Goals and objectives that speak to the(se) problem(s) and/or need(s); and

(3) Project activities that, if successfully carried out, can reasonably be expected to result in achieving these goals and objectives.

**Evaluation Criterion III. Coordination/Services Integration (Maximum: 15 points)**

*Element III. Coordination/Services Integration (0-15 Points)*

*Sub-Element III(a) Coordinated Community-Based Planning (0-10 Points)*

Application demonstrates evidence of coordinated community-based planning in its development, including strategies in the work program to collaborate with other locally-funded Federal programs (such as DHHS health and social services and USDA Food and Consumer Service programs) in ways that will eliminate duplication and will,

for example: (a) unite funding streams at the local level to increase program outreach and effectiveness; (b) facilitate access to other needed social services by coordinating and simplifying intake and eligibility certification processes for clients; or (c) bring project participants into direct interaction with holistic family development resources in the community where needed.

*Sub-Element III(b). Community Empowerment Consideration (0-5 Points)*

Special consideration will be given to applicants located in areas characterized by poverty and other indicators of socio-economic distress such as a poverty rate of at least 20 percent, designation as an Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community, high levels of unemployment, and high levels of incidences of violence, gang activity, crime, or drug use. Applicants should document their involvement in the preparation and planned implementation of a comprehensive community-based strategic plan to achieve both economic and human development in an integrated manner.

If the applicant is receiving funds from the State for community food and nutrition activities, the applicant should address how the funds are being utilized, and how they will be coordinated with the proposed project to maximize the effectiveness of both. If State funds are being used in the project for which OCS funds are being requested, their usage should be specifically described.

## **Evaluation Criterion IV. Organizational Profiles (Maximum: 15 points)**

### *Element IV. Organizational Experience and Administrative Capability (0-15 Points)*

#### *Sub-Element IV(a). Organizational Experience in Program Area (0-5 Points)*

The applicant should document the organization's capability and relevant experience in developing and operating programs that deal with poverty problems similar to those to be addressed by the proposed project. Documentation provided should indicate that projects previously undertaken have been relevant and effective and have provided permanent benefits to the low-income population. Organizations proposing training and technical assistance should have detailed competence in the program area and expertise in training and technical assistance. If applicable, information provided by these applicants also addresses related achievements and competence of each cooperating or sponsoring organization.

#### *Sub-Element IV(b). Management History (0-5 Points)*

Applicants must demonstrate their ability to implement sound and effective management practices. If they have been recipients of other Federal or other governmental grants, they must also document their compliance with financial and program progress reporting and audit requirements. Such documentation may be in the form of references to any available audit or progress reports and should be accompanied by a statement from a Certified or Licensed Public Accountant as to the

sufficiency of the applicant's financial management system to protect adequately any Federal funds awarded under the application submitted.

*Sub-Element IV(c). Staff Skills, Resources and Responsibilities (0-5 Points)*

The application should adequately describe the experience and skills of the proposed Project Director, showing that the individual is not only well qualified, but that his/her professional capabilities are relevant to successfully implement the project. If the key staff person has not yet been identified, the application contains a comprehensive position description indicating that the responsibilities to be assigned to the project director are relevant to successfully implement the project. The applicant must indicate that the applicant has adequate facilities and resources (i.e. space and equipment) to carry out the work plan successfully.

In addressing the above criterion, the applicant must clearly show that sufficient time of the Project Director and other senior staff will be budgeted to assure timely project implementation and oversight and that the assigned responsibilities of the staff are appropriate to the tasks identified.

**Evaluation Criterion V: Objectives and Need for Assistance (Maximum: 10 points)**

*Element V. Description of Target Population and Analysis of Needs/Priorities (0-10 Points)*

*Sub-Element V(a) Description of Target Population. (0-4 Points)*

In addressing this criterion, the applicant should describe the target area and population to be served, including specific details on any minority population(s) to be served.

*Sub-Element V(b) Analysis of Needs/Priorities (0-6 Points)*

In addressing the above criterion, the applicant should discuss the nature and extent of the problem(s) and/or need(s), including specific information on minority population(s).

**Evaluation Criterion VI. Budget and Budget Justification (Maximum: 5 points)**

*Element VI. Appropriateness of Budget (0-5 Points)*

Every application must include a Budget Justification, placed after the budget forms SF-424 and 424A, explaining the sources and uses of project funds. The budget is adequate and administrative costs are appropriate to the services proposed.